Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 17, 2020

The Honorable Pete Visclosky
Chairman
Defense Appropriations Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Ranking Member
Defense Appropriations Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Visclosky and Ranking Member Calvert:

As you work to develop the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Department of Defense (DOD) Appropriations bill, we write in support of Hacking for Defense (H4D), a unique innovation capability sponsored by DOD's National Security Innovation Network (NSIN).

We are requesting $40 million for NSIN, consistent with its Fiscal Year 2020 appropriation.

H4D is a university course developed by U.S. military combat veterans and taught at universities across the United States in which students apply cutting-edge research and problem-solving techniques to real-world national security and defense problems.

In its fourth year, H4D has been taught at over 30 universities across the United States. The requested funding will make it possible to scale up H4D and ensure that courses are one day available year-round in every state.

H4D was first authorized as a National Security Innovation and Entrepreneurial Education program in the Fiscal Year 2018 National Defense Authorization Act. In a December 2019 report produced by the bipartisan Reagan Institute Task Force on 21st Century National Security Technology and Workforce[1], Task Force members highlighted H4D as a model "to remove obstacles to collaboration between the USG and business and academic components of the NSIB [National Security Innovation Base]," and described H4D as "shaking up the DoD enterprise" by:

- "Reinterpreting and reimagining mission challenges in useful ways;
- Bringing the best civilian tech talent to bear on behalf of national security;
- Breaking down cultural barriers, pulling the tech and defense worlds together, and creating a recruitment pool of tech talent for the future;
- Leveraging the knowledge of private tech leaders to seek out the best problem solvers for particular challenges;
- Introducing the DOD to other parts of the NSIB ecosystem (e.g., the academy, tech entrepreneurs);

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[1] "The Contest for Innovation: Strengthening America's National Security Innovation Base in an Era of Strategic Competition," available at https://www.reaganfoundation.org/media/355297/the_contest_for_innovation_report.pdf.

- Acclimating our warfighters to thinking from a tech point of view about solving problems; and
- Blazing the trail in navigating existing DOD processes to bring new innovation and energy to the department."

H4D is creating innovative capabilities that support the National Defense Strategy, and it is contributing to building and growing the NSIB. Further, H4D trains veterans, scientists, engineers, and entrepreneurs to develop new capabilities that support U.S. national security and U.S. military readiness, while also stimulating the economy and private sector innovation.

We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Seth Moulton
Member of Congress